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A

TRUE AND COMPLETE

NARRATIVE

OF

ALL THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE PHILADELPHIA PRESBYTERY, AND OF THE PHILADELPHIA SYNOD,

IN RELATION TO THE CASE OF THE

REV. ALBERT BARNES.

"Errores, qui non refelluntur probari videntur; gangrænæ enim sunt, quas irritant, non curant, blandiora remedia."

Not to refute error, is virtually to approve it; for it is a gangrene which mild remedies aggravate, but do not cure.

PHILADELPHIA:
Printed by Russell & Martien, No. 22½ Walnut Street.
1830.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The first part of this Narrative was published several months since, in reply to an anonymous publication which was intended to impeach the conduct and motives of those members of the Philadelphia Presbytery, who had resisted the reception and installation of Mr. Barnes, upon the grounds of the doctrinal errors contained in his Sermon. The latter part of the Narrative is now published, to counteract the effect, which might otherwise be produced, by a pretended history of the late proceedings of the Philadelphia Presbytery, published by the Rev. Dr. Ely in the "Philadelphian," of which he is the Editor. This account, so far from presenting a faithful copy of the minutes of the Presbytery, may be considered throughout as a tissue of plausible misrepresentation.

This Narrative would not have appeared before the public, if the above account had not appeared; but the cause of truth now imperiously demands its publication. The question to which it refers is not of local, but general interest, and one which is likely to engage the attention of the Presbyterian Church throughout its entire bounds. For the manner in which the Narrative has been prepared, the writer alone is responsible; for the faithfulness with which the facts have been presented, he confidently appeals to every candid witness of the Presbyterial proceedings. As the Clerk of Presbytery, his duty rendered it incumbent upon him to pay close attention to every item of business as it was introduced, and he pledges

his veracity to the public, that he has not been guilty of any intentional misstatement, in the account which he now furnishes. The only request he has to make is, that those who have become interested in this affair, should form their opinion, not from the idle gossip to which it has given rise, but upon the strength of the evidence by which it is accompanied.

WM. M. ENGLES.

Philadelphia, December 18*th*, 1830.

NARRATIVE.

The debates in the Presbytery of Philadelphia, on the reception and installation of the Rev. Albert Barnes, have been regarded with unusual interest by many, as involving points of great moment to the Presbyterian Church, in relation both to her discipline and doctrine. They have not only furnished a pregnant theme for conversation, but a subject for the essayist and reporter. Several of the religious periodicals have lent their aid in circulating statements, from which the spirit of impartiality and equal justice has been discarded. Even in the earliest stages of the affair, and previous to any decision, this course was pursued, with the evident intention of prejudicing the public mind, and producing an effect which would influence the final determination of the Presbytery. The truth should never be dreaded, however loudly proclaimed or widely diffused; but when honest intentions are misrepresented, and facts are misstated, alarm is justifiable, and passiveness becomes criminal.

A pamphlet lately published in the city of New York, professes to give an accurate and detailed history of the debates in question, in which the names of the speakers are mentioned, and abstracts of their speeches furnished. The writer of it, in our opinion was totally disqualified for his task; a disqualification arising either from entire ignorance of his subject, or a determined dishonesty in its exhibition. He alike conceals the weak points of the majority and the strong points of the minority. He has betrayed little capacity for comprehending the argument, and less discretion in publishing his incompetency. In a word, the Sketch contains just sufficient colouring of truth, to give plausibility to general misrepresentation. Many, however, may receive his report as true, until they are furnished with more authentic information; and to supply this, we have been reluctantly compelled to abandon the reserve which we had intended to observe whilst the case was under judgment. A report of speeches which occupied a debate of seven days continuance, is not our intention. Such a report, to be honest, should be full, and would not only be tedious, but at this time, impracticable; and we should consider our candour and integrity in jeopardy by an imitation of the writer of the "Sketch," who reports a long speech in three unmeaning lines of a pamphlet. We must, however, be excused in following his example in one particular; we mean his freedom in the

use of names. In exercising this privilege for the purpose of rendering our narrative intelligible, it will be our aim to "render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's," avoiding the charge of libel, except where the truth may be construed into libel. This much being premised, we proceed to give the promised detail of circumstances in the order of their occurrence.

In the month of ——— it became the subject of common conversation, that the First Presbyterian Church of this city were directing their attention to the Rev. Albert Barnes, of Morristown, N. J. with the intention of presenting him a call to become their Pastor. His talents, ministerial fidelity, and success, were spoken of in terms of high commendation. At the same time, it was notorious that the candidate had never occupied the pulpit of the First Church, and that with the exception of a few individuals, the congregation were entirely ignorant, as far as their personal experience was concerned, of his ministerial qualifications. In addition to the verbal testimony of friends, a sermon preached and published by Mr. Barnes, was referred to in proof of his ability. This was freely circulated among the congregation, and the commendations bestowed upon it naturally excited the curiosity of many not connected with this Church, to see and peruse it. A rumour was at length heard, that this sermon contained errors in doctrine, which placed it in direct conflict with the doctrinal standards of the Presbyterian Church, and the truth of the rumour was shortly afterwards confirmed in a review* of the sermon, published in the "Philadelphian." This review proposed to place the sermon of Mr. Barnes and the Presbyterian Confession of Faith in *juxta-position*, that the discrepancies between them might be observed at a glance. This publication was decryed as an ungenerous and malignant personal attack upon the author of the sermon, although it speaks for itself, as a temperate exercise of a right which every individual possesses, of canvassing the merits of any published document. A reply from the pen of the Rev. Dr. Wilson soon appeared, and a controversy of considerable length between him and the reviewer was conducted and published in the same periodical.

In the mean time, a congregational meeting had been held in the First Church, and a call was determined upon for the Rev. Mr. Barnes. According to constitutional provision, it was necessary that this call should be submitted to the Presbytery, that they might grant or withhold their permission for

* The writer of this review was the Rev. Wm. M. Engles, whose name was revealed by the Editor, the Rev. Dr. Ely, to certain gentlemen belonging to the First Church, who had taken umbrage at the review. This was done without his concurrence, and he felt that he had reason to complain, that persons totally unauthorised to make the demand, and who were disposed to make an ungenerous use of the information, should have been gratified by the Editor at the first expression of their wish.

its prosecution before the Presbytery of Elizabethtown, of which Mr. Barnes was a member. At this stage, the ecclesiastical proceedings in the case commenced. When the call was presented before the Presbytery, at their stated meeting in April, and permission asked by the commissioners to prosecute it, the venerable Dr. Green arose, and with a manner characterised by kindness and courtesy, solicited the attention of the judicatory whilst he detailed the reasons which would induce him to give a negative vote on the motion then pending. These reasons, he said, were founded on Mr. Barnes' doctrinal errors, as they had been recently proclaimed to the world in his printed sermon, and upon which he proposed briefly to animadvert. His attempt, however, was hastily interrupted by a comparatively youthful member of the Presbytery, who affirmed it to be both irregular and unkind, to make the sermon a ground of judgment, as it would virtually amount to an arraignment and trial of Mr. Barnes for heresy, whilst he was beyond the jurisdiction of Presbytery. A motion to this effect was made and seconded, and a debate of considerable length and animation ensued on the point of order. On the one side, it was contended that a congregation had an unquestionable right to call any favourite candidate, provided his standing was regular in a co-ordinate judicatory, and that it was an arbitrary stretch of authority to interfere with that right upon any grounds; that the presentation of a call to Presbytery did not imply a right in them to adjudicate, but was merely a *pro forma* proceeding; and that to urge objections to a call, grounded upon the doctrinal delinquencies of a candidate, however proclaimed in his writings, was *extra-judicial*, whilst he remained unimpeached in the Presbytery to which he regularly appertained. On the other side, it was maintained that a congregation which had voluntarily subjected itself to the jurisdiction of a Presbytery, had no such independent right as that which was pleaded; that their right to call was not more clearly demonstrable than the right of Presbytery to object and refuse permission to proceed to subsequent steps; that the very fact of submitting a call to Presbytery for approval, implied the right of disapproval, and so far from being a mere *pro forma* proceeding, was a direct acknowledgment of jurisdiction; and, finally, that if members of a Presbytery had a right to vote upon such a question, they had a right also to state the reasons which determined their vote, and if these reasons were deduced from an authentic printed document, they neither violated the constitution of the church nor the laws of brotherly kindness in urging them. The argument being finished, it was decided by a vote of *thirty-seven* to *ten*, that it was perfectly regular for the members of Presbytery to raise objections to the prosecution of the call, from Mr. Barnes' printed sermon; the Rev. Dr. M'Auley and Messrs. Patterson, Belville, Biggs, Sanford, and Hoover, being

the only ministers who dissented. The attempt to enforce the gag law upon Presbytery having thus happily failed, the sermon of Mr. Barnes was read entire before Presbytery, by its order, and the debate then proceeded upon the original motion, "Shall the call be prosecuted?" The discussion of this question was protracted and singular in a high degree. Those who are now known as the "minority," met the question fearlessly upon its doctrinal merits, and opposed the call because Mr. Barnes had recently published a Sermon on the Way of Salvation, in which,

1. He makes no mention of the cardinal doctrine of justification by faith.

2. In which he contemptuously rejects the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin.

3. In which he intimates that the first moral taint of the creature is coincident with his first moral action.

4. In which he denies that Christ sustained the penalty of the law, and employs language on the subject highly derogatory to the character of Christ.

5. In which he boldly affirms that the atonement of Christ had no specific reference to individuals.

6. In which he declares, that the atonement in itself secured the Salvation of no Man, and possessed only a conditional efficacy.

7. In which he maintains that the entire inability of the sinner for holy actions consisted in indisposition of the will; and, finally, in which he declares his independence of all formularies of doctrine, notwithstanding his professed adherence to them.*

In addition to these reasons, it was also incidentally objected that the call was irregularly framed, omitting one important clause of the form, which is in these words, "and having good hopes from our past experience of your labours." The fact was, that the congregation had no past experience of the labours of

* It was thought by the minority, that these were not the *comparatively* venial errors of Hopkinsianism, but the more dangerous ones of Murdock, Taylor, and Fitch, which have recently been grafted on the original stock. Professor Woods of Andover, in his late admirable reply to some points in the *speculative, philosophical religion* of Dr. Taylor, coincides precisely with the minority of the Philadelphia Presbytery, in estimating the doctrines of the New Haven School. He considers them as in a high degree erroneous and dangerous. His language in the 98th page of his Letters, justly expresses the view by which the minority were influenced in their proceedings. It is as follows: "Whether right or wrong, we have been accustomed to consider the controversy which early arose in the Church between the Orthodox and Pelagians, and which, after the Reformation, was continued between the Lutherans and Calvinists on one side, and the Arminians or Remonstrants on the other, as of radical importance. Now, how would you expect us to feel, and, with our convictions, how ought we to feel, when a brother, *who has professed to be decidedly Orthodox, makes an attack upon several of the articles of our faith, and employs language on the subject of moral agency, free-will, depravity, divine influence, &c., which is so like the language of Arminians and Pelagians, that it would require some labour to discover the difference.*

the candidate, as they had never heard him preach; and this fact, which induced the remarkable omission, accounted also for another fact, that but *fifty* votes were given for the call, out of more than *two hundred and twenty* in the congregation who were legally entitled to vote.

On the part of the majority of Presbytery, the debate was conducted in a truly novel manner. With the single exception of Thomas Bradford, Esq. who honestly avowed his coincidence of sentiment with Mr. Barnes upon Hopkinsian ground, there was a studious and persevering endeavour to avoid the doctrinal discussion. The Rev. Dr. M'Auley admitted that the sermon contained some things which were not true, some that were equivocal, and some that were unhappily expressed; but he maintained that we had nothing to do with Mr. Barnes' doctrinal sentiments, although the Presbytery had just decided the validity of such a scrutiny. The Rev. Mr. Sanford occupied the same ground, substantially, and hoped that he might not be considered as giving any opinion upon the doctrinal question. The remarks of the Rev. Dr. Ely were written at length, and read before the Presbytery, and the tenor of them was, that although there were many things in the sermon which appeared suspicious, yet, with a little of his interpretative and explanatory aid, they could be reconciled with orthodoxy. But the all-powerful argument which appeared to be most relied upon, if we judge from its frequent reiteration, was, that Mr. Barnes had the confidence of many excellent men, that he was an exemplary Christian, and that he had been a successful preacher of the Gospel! This furnished a prolific topic for declamation, and the *understandings* of the Presbyters were forgotten in the anxiety to affect and enlist their *feelings*. A persecuted saint, assailed in his character and impeded in his career of usefulness, was a picture, it would seem, too affecting for the *judgment* of some men to withstand. Whether such appeals were honourable in a doctrinal discussion of this kind, the candid reader is left to decide. But this was not all, attempts were made to overawe the minority. They were told that the *world* had already sounded the alarm of ecclesiastical domination and tyranny—that the discussion was doing great disservice to the cause of religion in the community at large—that public sentiment was too enlightened and liberal to countenance such inquisitorial proceedings—that the call in question was from the *First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia*—and that that respectable and important congregation would secede if their wish was denied, and last, though not least, for its preposterousness—that the First Church would decline any future contributions to the Board of Missions, because the Rev. Dr. Green and the Rev. Joshua T. Russell, the President and the

General Agent of that Board, were members of the minority!* Arguments of this class, however they might indicate the policy, certainly did little credit to the understandings of those who broached them. They doubtless produced an effect upon some minds: it soon became apparent that there was a popular and an unpopular side to the question, and those who were unwilling to encounter reproach, and submit to misrepresentation, had their resort.

The motion was at length put to the house, "Shall the commissioners have leave to prosecute the call?" and it was carried in the affirmative, by a vote of twenty-one to twelve. The minority then recorded the following Protest, and the Presbytery adjourned.

PROTEST.

We, the minority in the above case, do hereby protest against the foregoing decision for the reasons following, viz:

The Rev. Albert Barnes, the person to whom the call from the Frist Presbyterian Church was directed, in a Sermon preached, and lately published by him accompanied by notes, which he has entitled "The Way of Salvation," and in which he professes to give "the leading doctrines of the Bible, respecting God's way of saving men," has, as we conceive, broached errors, which we, as guardians of the purity of the Church, cannot, in any way, countenance; because we believe them to be opposed to the doctrinal standards of the Presbyterian Church, and in their tendency, exceedingly dangerous; as will be seen from the following particulars, viz.

1. It is believed by the undersigned that the Rev. Mr. Barnes has denied in this Sermon, with its accompanying notes, the fundamental doctrine of original sin, as plainly and expressly taught in the standards of our Church. So far from admitting the federal and representative character of Adam, and our responsibility, in him, he says at page 6, "Christianity does not charge on men crimes of which they are not guilty. It does not say, as I suppose, *that the sinner is held to be personally answerable for the transgressions of Adam or of any other man*, or that God has given a law which man has no power to obey. Such a *charge* and such a requirement would be most *clearly unjust.*" And again, at page 7, he says, "neither the facts,

* We had regarded this as an idle threat, incautiously uttered, but we have since learned that an individual of that congregation, who had pledged himself in the 100 dollar subscription, has since declined to redeem his pledge!

Mr. Russell, from his former associations, was well qualified to engage in this debate, and expose the dangerous speculations of the new school divinity. This he did with much force and ability, and this, we are glad to say, he continued to do, although reminded that a *calculating policy* would best subserve his official success in the management of the Assembly's Missions.

nor any proper inference from the facts, affirm that I am in either case *personally responsible for what another man did before I had an existence.*" Again, in the same page, he asserts, that "*the notion of imputing sin is an invention of modern times.*" And again, in the same page, he says, "Christianity affirms the fact, that in connexion with the sin of Adam, or as a *result*, all *moral agents* will sin and sinning will die;" and then proceeds to say, "It does not affirm, however, any thing about the *mode* in which this would be done. There are many ways conceivable in which that sin might secure the result, as there are many ways in which all *similar facts* may be explained. The drunkard commonly secures as a result, the fact that his family will be beggared, illiterate, perhaps profane or intemperate. Both facts are evidently to be explained on the same principle as a part of moral government." Here, it is conceived, the author of the Sermon represents the effects of Adam's fall upon his posterity as their *misfortune* and not as their *sin*. And the Protestants do further consider it to be implied in the statements of the Sermon, that infants are *sinless* until in the exercise of moral agency they do positively, by their own act, violate the law. Vide Con. of Faith, cap. vi. and Catechism Larger and Shorter, on Art. "Original Sin."

2. On the doctrine of the Atonement, the Protestants believe that Mr. Barnes maintains sentiments which are in direct contradiction to those set forth in our doctrinal standards. At page 11, he says, "This atonement was for all men. *It was an offering made for the race.* It had not respect so much to *individuals* as to the law and perfections of God. It was an opening of the way of pardon, a making forgiveness consistent, a preserving of truth, a magnifying of the law, *and had no particular reference to any class of men.*"

Again, at page 11, he says, "*The atonement of itself secured the salvation of no one;*" and again, "The atonement secured the salvation of no one, except as God had promised his Son that he should see of the travail of his soul, and except on the condition of repentance and faith." Vide Con. of Faith, cap. viii. 5 and 8.

Again, at page 10, he says Christ "did not endure indeed the penalty of the law;" and again, page 11, he says, "Christ's sufferings were severe, more severe than those of *any mortal* before or since; but they bore, as far as we can see, only a very distant resemblance to the pains of hell, the proper penalty of the law. Nor is it possible to conceive that the sufferings of a *few hours*, however severe, could equal pains, though far less intense, eternally prolonged. Still less that the sufferings of human nature, in a single instance, for the divine nature could not suffer, should be equal to the eternal pain of many millions." Vide Larger Cat. Q. 38.

In all this language the Protestants do sincerely believe, that Mr. Barnes denies that Jesus Christ was a vicarious sacri-

fice—that his atonement had a definite design—that it was in itself efficacious—and that it was a proper satisfaction to divine justice for the sins of his elect.

3. In this Sermon, the Protestants believe that Mr. Barnes employs language on the subject of man's ability, which is contrary to the standards of our Church.

In speaking of sinners rejecting the Gospel, he says, page 14, "It is not to any want of physical strength, that this rejection is owing, for men have power enough in themselves to hate both God and their fellow men, and it requires less physical power to love God than to hate him;" and on the same page, he evidently insinuates that man's sole inability is in the will, and the principal effect of conversion upon the will. Again, page 30, in speaking of the causes which exclude a sinner from heaven, he says, "*It is simply because you will not be saved.*" The Protestants believe that to ascribe man's inability to the will alone, is contrary to the doctrine of our Church. Vide Con. of Faith, cap. vi. 4.

In addition to the foregoing reasons founded on the doctrinal errors advanced in the Sermon, we protest also, because,

1. In the forecited Sermon, professing to give a summary of leading doctrines relating to man's salvation, *no mention whatever* is made of the doctrine of justification by faith through the imputed righteousness of Christ, a defect, which, under the circumstances, cannot well be accounted for, except on the supposition that it was not received by the author; and,

2. Because the author of the Sermon makes certain general declarations which induce us to believe, that he does not properly regard his obligation to adhere to the doctrinal standards of the Presbyterian Church. Thus, at page 6, he says in relation to one of his statements, "It is not denied that this language varies from the statements which are often made on this subject, and from the opinion which has been entertained by many. And it is admitted that it does *not accord with that used on the same subject in the Confession of Faith* and other standards of doctrine." And, again at page 12, he says, "The great principle on which the author supposes the truths of religion are to be preached, and on which he endeavours to act, is, that the Bible is to be interpreted by all the honest helps within the reach of the preacher, and then proclaimed as it is, *let it lead* where it will within or without the circumference of any arrangement of doctrines. He is supposed to be responsible not at all for its impinging on any theological system; nor is he to be cramped by any frame-work of faith that has been reared around the Bible."

And we do hereby further protest against the forementioned decision, because,

1. We believe, for the reasons stated above, that the decision

will prove injurious to the purity of the Church, and to the best interests of religion : and,

2. Because, notwithstanding it had been decided on a previous question, by a vote of 37 to 10, that it was the right of Presbytery in examining the qualifications of their own members, to bring the said printed Sermon of Mr. Barnes under review, and to draw thence arguments for or against the prosecution of the call; yet in the final vote, a number of those who voted in the majority, whilst expressing their dissent from Mr. Barnes' doctrines, declared that they were guided in their vote, by the consideration that Presbytery had no right to inquire into Mr. Barnes' theological views, or to make them a ground of objection to the prosecution of the call.

For these reasons we consider it our solemn duty to protest against that decision, which granted leave to the commissioners from the First Presbyterian Church to prosecute a call for the Rev. Albert Barnes before the Presbytery of Elizabethtown.

(Signed)

Ministers.—Ashbel Green, George C. Potts, John Burtt, Joshua T. Russell, Alvin H. Parker, W. L. M'Calla, William M. Engles, Charles Williamson.

Elders.—Andw. Brown, Jos. P. Engles, James Algeo, Moses Reed.

A special meeting of the Presbytery was held on the 18th of June following, "for the purpose of considering the subject of the reception of the Rev. Mr. Barnes, and to do what may be deemed proper in his installation." This meeting was held in the Lecture room of the First Church, and was numerously attended by Presbyters and spectators. The indelicacy of abandoning the usual place of meeting, and selecting this location, might be a subject of just comment; but if it had a design to influence, it totally failed; the minority neither retracted nor modified their ground. The following extract from the minutes of Presbytery will show how the business was introduced at this stage. "The Rev. Albert Barnes presented a certificate of dismission from the Presbytery of Elizabethtown to join the Presbytery of Philadelphia. The minutes of the Presbytery at their last stated meeting in relation to the case of the Rev. Albert Barnes, were then read. It was then moved and seconded, that Mr. Barnes be received as a member of this Presbytery; and after some discussion, it was moved (by the Rev. Dr. Ely,) and seconded, that the motion now under consideration be postponed, that before deciding on it, any brother of the Presbytery who may deem it necessary, may ask of the Rev. Mr. Barnes such explanations of his doctrinal views as said brethren may deem necessary." Here the question determining the right of a Presbytery to examine the qualifications of those proposing to become members, by dismission from a co-ordinate judicatory was brought prominently under

debate, although it had been virtually decided in the affirmative by the first vote of the Presbytery at their April sessions. The right was strenuously contended for on the one side as one recognized by the constitution; as clearly ascertained by various decisions of the General Assembly; as inherent in Presbyteries as radical courts; as necessary, as a safeguard against the rapid spread of error; and as essential to preserve the proceedings of a Presbytery against foreign interference. The argument on the other side, was the mere and confident denial of all these principles, as calculated to bring Presbyteries into conflict, and thus to interrupt the peace of the Church. Strange as it may appear, assertion prevailed over demonstration, and the right of Presbytery to examine the qualifications of its own members, was denied, by a vote of twenty to eighteen, twelve ministers voting in the affirmative and twelve in the negative. The original motion for Mr. Barnes' admission being again brought under consideration, it was moved by the Rev. Mr. Engles, that the motion now under consideration be postponed with a view to take up the following:

"*Resolved*, That the certificate presented to this Presbytery by the Rev. Mr. Barnes, from the Presbytery of Elizabethtown, be sent back to the Presbytery of Elizabethtown, with an attested copy of all the minutes of this Presbytery in relation to his case, with a request that the said Presbytery will consider and decide upon those doctrinal sentiments contained in a printed sermon of Mr. Barnes, which are referred to in a Protest signed by a minority of this Presbytery, and which are considered as grounds of objection to his admission into this Presbytery."

The majority had, in the course of argument, indicated this as the proper resort of the minority, but now feeling themselves to be sufficiently strong to carry all their measures, they changed their views and negatived the motion. The debate on Mr. Barnes' reception was then commenced anew.

To report speeches is not our intention; but we cannot refrain from adverting to that of the Rev. Mr. M'Calla, as an able and masterly defence of orthodoxy, in opposition to the spurious theology of New England, and to that of the Rev. Dr. Green, as the solemn warning of the sole representative of the fathers of our church, now fallen asleep, who, having observed the disastrous decline of the once glorious churches of France, Switzerland, and Ireland, could not suppress his grief in remarking on the present occasion, the same false spirit of liberality; the same unbounded latitude of interpretation, and the same unwillingness to arrest error in its commencement which had brought on their eclipse. At this stage of the business, the Rev. Dr. Ely, who had strenuously defended the right of Presbytery, to examine Mr. Barnes, arose, and stated that he purposed to vote for the reception of Mr. Barnes, because, from a *private interview*, he was convinced of his general orthodoxy, in proof of

which, he read a written creed prepared by himself, and adopted and signed by Mr. Barnes. This was a proceeding, in our opinion alike discreditable to both parties; the dignity of Mr. Barnes was compromised in submitting to have his views explained by another, when he was so earnestly solicited to improve the most favourable opportunity of doing it himself, and the dignity of Dr. Ely suffered in condescending to string together a set of nicely adjusted phrases, which, however orthodox their aspect, were evidently intended to cover two schemes of totally different characters.* It is with reluctance that we advert to such transactions, but we wish our narrative to be recommended by its truth. The vote was eventually taken by ayes and noes, on the motion for receiving Mr. Barnes, and decided in the affirmative, sixteen ministers and fourteen elders voting in the affirmative, and nine ministers and seven elders in the negative.

A paper was then presented to the moderator, containing charges against Mr. Barnes, for his unsoundness in the faith and in arrest of his installation. The moderator, however, decided it to be out of order, as originating a new business at a *pro re nata* meeting. This opinion was appealed from by Dr. Ely, but the appeal was not sustained. He, and at least two others of the majority, contended that the *mere announcement* from the moderator of the existence of such a paper of charges, was a sufficient bar to the installation, and yet immediately afterwards, they surmounted the bar and voted for the installation.† Strange occurrences take place in over anxiety to give success to a favourite measure, and these sessions of the Pres-

* It is true, that Mr. Barnes did, on one occasion, rise and promise to make some explanations of his doctrinal views. This he said he would do voluntarily, but not in compliance with a demand, which he was convinced Presbytery had no right to make. The minority were pleased with the promise, although Mr. Barnes was careful to represent it as a mere concession of courtesy; but at the manner in which he fulfilled it, they were not only disappointed but surprised. It is doubtful if he occupied the floor for *five minutes*, and in that time explanations could not have been expected, much less satisfactory ones. He acknowledged, it is true, that his sermon was defective, through oversight, on the doctrine of justification, (an acknowledgment which the "Sketch" has *forgotten* to record,) but what he said in brevity, on the other disputed points, only tended to increase the suspicion, and confirm the conviction of his error, in the minds of the minority.

† Upon the presentation of this paper by Mr. Hoff, (whose manner in this whole transaction was characterised by firmness and decision,) a curious scene ensued. The moderator, commendable for his general impartiality, decided the paper to be out of order, if it professed to be a copy of charges, but to be in order, if it professed to be a bar to the installation. Now, it so happened, that it came under both these professions, and hence a dilemma. The majority, however, confirmed the decision that it was out of order, and yet determined that it should be read. Dr. Ely, Mr. Biggs, and Mr. Steel, professed to regard the paper, before it was read, as a very serious obstacle to the installation; but, subsequently, Mr. Biggs found that the charges contained *no new matter;* Dr. Ely, that they were preferred *too late;* and Mr. Steel offered no ground for a change of opinion, and they were eventually found united in the vote for installation.

bytery have been prolific of such occurrences. It was decided by regular vote, that Mr. Barnes' doctrinal errors might be canvassed, and it was also decided that they might not be canvassed; it was maintained, that Mr. Barnes might be arraigned when he should become a member of Presbytery, and it was maintained by the same persons, when he had became a member, and an arraignment was attempted, that it was too late to arraign him for acts committed in another Presbytery, and in the full knowledge of which he had been received by this; there were those who declared themselves to be of the old orthodox school, and yet were willing to lend their influence in promoting the interests of the new school, which is any thing but orthodox; it was maintained by the same person, that the same sermon contained false doctrine, and that it contained no false doctrine; some were found who could advocate one side of a cause in their speeches, and advocate the opposite side by their votes; but we forbear; our only comment is, that truth is beautifully consistent with itself. This we honestly believe to be a correct narrative of the proceedings in relation to the case of the Rev. Mr. Barnes, and it has been extorted from us by the officious zeal of those who have attempted to pre-occupy the public attention by their imperfect and garbled sketch.

Hostility to any of the brethren we disclaim. We merely review and condemn that conduct which we consider reprehensible in them as Presbyters. We conscientiously believe that we have stated the truth, and we are willing to defend it. If there must be controversy, *we* have not sought it, but, obtruded upon us, we will not avoid it.

[*The foregoing narrative was published as a measure of self-defence, before the litigated question had been referred to the consideration of the Synod of Philadelphia; and it is now republished, for the purpose of presenting under one view, a full and consecutive history of the proceedings in this case.*]

On the 27th of October, 1830, the Synod of Philadelphia held its annual sessions in the city of Lancaster; at which time, the minority solicited the exercise of their jurisdiction in the above mentioned case, by laying before them the following

COMPLAINT.

The undersigned, members of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, influenced by considerations affecting the purity and stability of the Church, feel constrained to avail themselves of a constitutional provision, in making their complaint to the Revd. Synod of Philadelphia, of certain acts and proceedings in the before mentioned Presbytery, which have been determined in opposition to their judgment, and which, from their importance, require the review of a superior judicatory. As

a succinct history of the proceedings referred to, will be necessary to a proper understanding of the grounds of complaint, they respectfully solicit the attention of Synod to the following recital.

At the stated meeting of the Presbytery of Philadelphia in April last, commissioners from the First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, presented a call directed to the Rev. Albert Barnes, of the Presbytery of Elizabethtown. In relation to this call, the following facts were brought to light, viz: That Mr. Barnes had never preached as a candidate for this congregation—that but *fifty* voters, out of more than *two hundred and twenty*, had sanctioned it—that there was an important omission in it of these words in the prescribed form, "and having good hopes, from our past experience of your labours," which express a fundamental reason upon which a call can be properly founded—and finally, that Mr. Barnes had been called upon the testimony of a small delegation who had heard him preach, and upon the merits of a sermon which he had published. These facts, in the opinion of some members of the Presbytery, seemed to indicate the propriety of caution and hesitation in proceeding to ulterior measures; but in addition to these facts, important objections to the prosecution of the call, arose from the nature of those doctrines which Mr. Barnes had published under his name, in the sermon entitled "The Way of Salvation." A question arose on the propriety of bringing the sentiments of Mr. Barnes on doctrinal points under review, with reference to the prosecution of the call. This question was decided affirmatively by a large majority, and the sermon was accordingly read and canvassed. In the course of the discussion, the objectionable statements of Mr. Barnes in this sermon, were presented in detail, and in the minds of many, produced not merely a suspicion, but a conviction that they were essential deviations from that system of doctrines set forth in the standards of our Church. The undersigned were conscious that they had no sinister end to accomplish in the candid exposure of the objectionable doctrines of this sermon, and that so far from cherishing any personal feelings of hostility to Mr. Barnes, they were solely actuated by the desire of guarding the purity of the Church, with faithfulness and vigilance. They listened with attention to every explanation offered in mitigation of the excepted phraseology of the sermon, and they anxiously courted such discussion of the disputed points, as would have fully elicited the truth. But they are now under the necessity of complaining that their arguments in proof of Mr. Barnes' unsoundness in the faith, were summarily set aside, upon the plea that his peculiar theological sentiments could not be at that time a proper subject of discussion, although the right of such discussion had already been fully admitted by the first vote of

the Presbytery. The undersigned, at an early period of the debate found themselves to be in a minority, and in this character they felt obliged to contend earnestly for two points: 1st. That every Presbytery has a clearly ascertained right of examining the qualifications of any person proposing himself for admission into their body, and of rejecting his application, if his qualifications come short of the prescribed standards; it being admitted, that the exercise of this right is in every case subject to the review of the superior judicatories: and 2d. That the doctrines proclaimed by Mr. Barnes in his printed sermon, upon the most candid examination, were found to be so essentially at variance with those of our standards, as virtually to preclude his admission; unless it could be ascertained that the intention of his expressions had been misunderstood, or that he had disclaimed the sentiments which his language seemed to convey. In urging the first point, the undersigned adduced various arguments, which they humbly conceive were not satisfactorily rebutted; and they are forced to complain that the Presbytery, although by their first vote they had virtually acknowledged the doctrine for which they contended, did finally deny the right in Presbyteries of examining those who might apply for admission. In urging the second point, the undersigned are conscious of no undue pertinacity in pursuing their object, which was to ascertain if their apprehensions of Mr. Barnes' want of orthodoxy were justly or unjustly entertained, and whether his doctrinal views were at variance or coincident with the Presbyterian standards. And in relation to this point, they are constrained to complain, that their honest intentions were not met with a spirit of brotherly accommodation. They first proposed that they should have permission to interrogate Mr. Barnes on those features in his sermon which had awakened their fears, and which are enumerated in their protest, that he might have an opportunity of explaining his views, and if possible, of removing their difficulties. This reasonable request was denied. They then proposed, if there was any doubt on the question of jurisdiction, that Mr. Barnes should be returned with his certificate to his own Presbytery, with a respectful request that that Presbytery should enter into the proposed inquiry. This proposition was also rejected. They then, as a final measure, after the reception of Mr. Barnes, offered to appear as his prosecutors for unsoundness in the faith, and in due form presented their charges, but their charges were not permitted to lie, and Mr. Barnes was admitted to installation.

It is not the intention of the undersigned to enumerate all the minor grounds which would justify complaint, but they do most earnestly and respectfully solicit the Synod to redress them in what they consider the infringement and denial of their rights as Presbyters.

As the question involved in this complaint is one of unparalleled importance, and as the decision of it will constitute a precedent, they do most earnestly entreat the Revd. Synod to give it a prayerful consideration, and in their wisdom to determine whether the grounds of complaint be not just and reasonable.

Signed—*Ministers*—Ashbel Green, George C. Potts, A. H. Parker, Joshua T. Russell, William M. Engles, Brogun Hoff, Alexander Boyd, Charles Williamson.

Elders—Henry M'Keen, Joseph P. Engles, Moses Reed, Andrew Brown, James Algeo.

After the complaint had been read, it was submitted to the Judicial Committee, who reported that the following order be observed in the consideration of it by the Synod; viz., that all the minutes of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, relating to the case, be first read; that the complainants be then heard; that the Presbytery be heard in reply; that the complainants, if they should desire it, be again heard, and that then, the members of the Presbytery be considered as withdrawn from the house, and that the whole case be submitted to the Synod for their deliberation and adjudication.

This order of proceeding was strictly observed, and the discussion was conducted by the Synod in a manner peculiarly exhilirating to the friends of truth, and peculiarly honourable to themselves. With a few exceptions, no quibbling was resorted to, with the view of evading the points in dispute, but the question was met in its length and in its breadth, both as it involved points of constitutional law and points of doctrine. The proceedings of the Presbytery were freely canvassed; the doctrines of the sermon freely discussed; and the prevalence of New Haven divinity was loudly deplored and deprecated. In the course of this debate, much ability was displayed, and a fearlessness in the defence of a decried orthodoxy, which we trust will still redeem the Church from the errors which threaten to engulph it, by displacing that false notion of compromise, which would preserve the peace of the Church at the expense of her purity.*

The Synod having been occupied nearly two days in the consideration of this subject, came to the following decision, viz.

"The Synod, having considered the subject of the com-

* Mr. Barnes himself, read before the Synod an elaborate paper, in which, as introductory, he complained of the conduct of the minority, and stated, that he had entertained serious thoughts of subjecting them to a regular process! The paper neither retracted nor modified the exceptionable features of the sermon; but was rather considered as their defence. It was listened to with much attention, but the effect produced, was not answerable to the expectation with which it was prepared. This was evident, from the tone of the subsequent discussion, and particularly from the nature of the final decision. Indeed, Mr. Barnes' professed advocates did not, it is believed, once allude to it as a satisfactory exculpation.

plaints preferred by some of the members of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, relative to the proceedings of said Presbytery, in the case of the Rev. A. Barnes, and heard the parties in the case, came to the following resolutions, viz. :

1. *Resolved*, That the Presbytery of Philadelphia, in not allowing the examination of Mr. Barnes, in connection with his printed Sermon, previously to his reception as a member of Presbytery, and especially before his installation as Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, gave just ground of complaint to the minority.

2. "*Resolved*, That the complainants be referred back to the Presbytery of which they are members, with an injunction to that Presbytery, to hear and decide on their objections to the orthodoxy of the sermon of Mr. Barnes, and to take such order on the whole subject, as is required by a regard to the purity of the Church, and its acknowledged doctrines and order."

On the adoption of the first resolution, the ayes and noes were as follows, viz.:

Ayes.—Messrs. Martin, Magraw, White, J. Latta, Gilbert, Douglass, Love, Morrison, Breckenridge, Hubbard, Annan, Musgrave, M'Conaughy, Wilson, Moody, Sharon, Jas. Williamson, Olmstead, Fullerton, M'Knight Williamson, Bryson, J. B. Patterson, M. B. Patterson, and Smith, *Ministers;* and Messrs. Stanley, Patterson, Lefevre, Schell, Welsh, and Gabby, *Elders.*

Noes.—Messrs. Dickey, Barr, Dickinson, Kennedy, Duffield, and De Witt, *Ministers;* and Messrs. Kirkpatrick and Slaymaker, *Elders.*

On the adoption of the second resolution, the ayes and noes were as follows, viz. :

Ayes.—Messrs. Martin, Magraw, White, J. Latta, Douglass, Love, Breckenridge, Hubbard, Annan, Musgrave, M'Conaughy, Wilson, Moody, Sharon, James Williamson, Olmstead, Fullerton, M'Knight Williamson, Bryson, J. B. Patterson, M. B. Patterson, and Smith, *Ministers;* and Messrs. Stanley, Patterson, Lefevre, Schell, Welsh, and Gabby, *Elders.*

Noes.—Messrs. Dickey, Gilbert, Barr, Morrison, Dickinson, Kennedy, Duffield, and De Witt, *Ministers;* and Messrs. Slaymaker and Kirkpatrick, *Elders.*

It need not be said that this decision, obtained by so large a majority, was extremely gratifying to the complainants; it embraced the full amount of their request, and effectually redressed them, by distinctly recognizing the constitutional right, for which they had so earnestly contended, but of the exercise of which, they had been unjustly deprived. It should be recollected that on this question the members of the Philadelphia Presbytery had no vote, and consequently it was

decided by those, who, having had no share in the previous debates, were most likely to be impartial and unbiassed judges. From this decision, no appeal was taken to the highest judicatory of the Church. The reasons which dictated this course, although left to conjecture for a time, were fully developed by subsequent events.

The Synod did not adjourn until Monday at 2 o'clock, P. M. and it so occurred that the Philadelphia Presbytery had an adjourned meeting on the following day, at 3 o'clock, P. M. to attend to an item of unfinished business. Little imagining that any measures would be urged at that meeting in relation to the decision of Synod, the *complainants* used no particular expedition in hastening to Philadelphia; and, indeed, circumstances rendered it utterly impracticable for most of them to have arrived in season for the meeting of Presbytery, and, accordingly, but *three* of them were present. At this meeting many of the majority were present, and several of them were attended by their Elders. It was, from the first, evident that such zeal in the array of force, was the precursor of some interesting measure. In due time it was developed in the form of a motion from the Rev. Dr. Ely, which was in these words, viz:—"Moved, that in consequence of the minute and order of the Synod of Philadelphia, this day reported to this Presbytery, and above recorded, the Presbytery will now proceed to take up and consider the charges which were presented against the Rev. A. Barnes, on the 23d day of June last, and which were signed by the Rev. Dr. Ashbel Green and others." The mover prefaced his motion by some *strong* remarks tending to show that the signers of that paper, were absolutely obliged to prosecute their charges, and that, *as accusers, they would be excluded from voting on the final decision.* This master-stroke of policy was in effect saying, "since the Synod constrain us to investigate the orthodoxy of Mr. Barnes' Sermon, the arrangement shall so be made, as to exclude the complainants from any voice in the proceeding." Notwithstanding this motion was pronounced to be out of order by the Moderator, (the Rev. Mr. Russell) as it contemplated charges which had no existence, it was carried; and it was subsequently resolved that the charges be read, and as they did not appear, the stated Clerk was directed to furnish them at the next meeting. The light in which this strange proceeding was regarded by the minority, will best appear from the following protest which was entered upon the minutes.

PROTEST.

We the undersigned do hereby protest against the resolution offered by Dr. Ely, and adopted by this Presbytery, and which is recorded above, for the following reasons, viz.

1. Because it was proposed at a time when but two members

of the minority, (excepting the Moderator) so deeply concerned in it, were present, and when it must have been known to the mover, that the remaining members of the minority had not yet returned from the meeting of Synod.

2. Because the attempt to press such a measure at an adjourned meeting, without having first apprised the minority who were absent and entirely unsuspicious of such a design, was assuming an unfair advantage.

3. Because the resolution was intended, as expressed by the mover, to constrain the minority to appear as accusers, and thus deprive them of their right to vote in the case.

4. Because the resolution proceeds upon a false presumption, that a certain paper of charges existed as the property of this Presbytery, when it is matter of record, that said paper, when presented was pronounced to be out of order, and was not therefore considered as before the Presbytery; and when this Presbytery evidently regarded it as having no existence, by refraining from passing any vote for its acceptance ; by omitting to take those previous steps which are rendered obligatory by the book of discipline when charges are first presented against a Bishop, and especially, by their proceeding immediately to take measures for Mr. Barnes' installation, which would not have been done had he been under process.

5. Because the resolution takes for granted that that paper was of a certain tenor and was signed by Dr. Ashbel Green and others, when the assumed facts were never before this Presbytery in a formal and regular way, and could not therefore be a proper ground of proceeding.

6. Because the course proposed by the resolution, besides being based upon a false presumption, is directly opposed to the recent determination of Synod, which provides that the minority should present their objections to the orthodoxy of Mr. Barnes' sermon, and that the Presbytery should then hear and decide upon the validity of these objections ; thus evidently putting it into the power of the minority, and not of the Presbytery, to commence proceedings in the case and to prescribe the particular course. (Signed)

WM. M. ENGLES.
GEORGE C. POTTS.

The Presbytery met on the 30th of November following, in the Session Room of the Second Presbyterian Church, at the call of the moderator, for the express purpose of acting on the resolutions of Synod before recorded. This meeting was numerously attended, there being present *thirty-five ministers and twenty-four elders*. It soon became manifest that those who had been in the *minority* in the previous stages of this business, had now become the *majority*, and it will be recollected that in the subsequent use of these terms, the majority

represent those who opposed the errors of Mr. Barnes' sermon, and the minority, his friends and supporters.

The business was then introduced by the Rev. Dr. Green, who presented a long minute in the form of a resolution, with a view of directing the discussion which was about to take place, and of giving system and order to the proceedings.* When this motion was seconded, a course of opposition was commenced by the minority, with Dr. Ely as their leader, which perhaps is unparalleled in the annals of ecclesiastical proceedings, and the sole intention of which appeared to be to delay and to embarrass.

"Dr. Ely moved to postpone the consideration of the minute offered by Dr. Green, that Presbytery may call upon the Stated Clerk for the charges against Mr. Barnes, which he was required to produce at the last meeting of the Presbytery."

It was considered by the Presbytery that there were no such charges as those alluded to in the motion, as appeared from the reasons stated in the Protest; and that the Synod, in the instructions and directions which it had given to the Presbytery, had never contemplated the revival and prosecution of any such charges.

The motion of Dr. Ely was then put to the house and lost. The Dr. not deterred by his defeat was prepared for a second assault. He moved the postponement of Dr. Green's motion, with a view to take up the following, viz.:

"*Resolved*, That this Presbytery cannot entertain and act upon the paper introduced by Dr. Green, because it is virtually an indictment of Mr. Barnes for heresy, until some persons appear as accusers."

In this also he was defeated, but, nothing daunted, he presented his third attack in the following form, viz.:

"*Resolved*, That this Presbytery cannot constitutionally and judicially hear any objections against the *orthodoxy* of any sermon preached and published by Mr. Barnes, until some persons appear as his accusers; or until the Presbytery shall judge that common fame requires him to be arraigned for heresy."

And in this also he was defeated. These several resolutions were pronounced by the Moderator to be disorderly, as being mere repetitions, which improperly occupied the time of the Presbytery, in urging a course of proceeding against which they had already decided. Thrice was an appeal taken from the Moderator's decision by Dr. Ely, and thrice was his appeal negatived. How many motions of a similar tenor and of similar intention, were held in reserve by the mover is not known;

* This minute, which was finally adopted, as expressive of the sense of the Presbytery on the doctrinal errors of Mr. Barnes' sermon, is inserted in a subsequent part of this narrative.

although it is believed he had several; but as much time had been already uselessly expended, and the patience of the house was nearly exhausted, it was thought expedient, to adopt some plan to arrest the course which the minority had thought proper to pursue. This was effected by a motion from Mr. Engles to this effect: that the motion of Dr. Green be postponed with a view to take up the following viz.:

"*Resolved*, That the Presbytery do now proceed to hear the objections which may be urged against the Sermon of Mr. Barnes, agreeably to the decision of Synod, making the minute offered by Dr. Green the basis upon which the proceeding shall be conducted."

Dr. Ely finding that he could not postpone a postponement, and that the last motion precluded the repetition of useless and thrice defeated motions, then rose, and by permission of Presbytery, read the following

PROTEST.

The undersigned members of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, do hereby protest,

I. Against the decision of this body, yesterday, that they would not postpone the consideration of the minute moved by Dr. Green, for the purpose of calling upon the Stated Clerk for the charges against Mr. Barnes, which he was required to produce at the last meeting of Presbytery, for the following reasons, viz: 1. CHARGES, against the orthodoxy of Mr. Barnes were publicly handed to the Moderator of this Presbytery on the 23d of June last, and were read by ORDER of this Presbytery; and although those charges were then decided to be out of order at a special meeting *as the commencement of a trial;* yet it will not follow that it is out of order NOW to consider and dispose of them in a constitutional way; at a meeting of Presbytery specially called, among other things, "to take such order on the whole subject, as is required by a regard to the purity of the Church, and its acknowledged doctrines and order." 2. These charges having been read, this Presbytery gave no leave to any one to withdraw them from their files. 3. The complainants to the Synod of Philadelphia, among other alleged grievances, complained, that they "in due form presented their charges, but their charges were not permitted to lie:" from which it would seem proper that this Presbytery should now formally consider and dispose of those charges, that this ground of complaint and grievance may no longer exist. 4. These charges were calculated vitally to affect the ministerial character and standing of the Rev. Albert Barnes, and therefore ought not to be left noted on our records, without some final adjudication in relation to them. 5. The persons who signed and preferred those charges ought still, agreeably to our Constitution, to be held as accusers; and therefore it

was important to consider and act upon them, that the charges being disposed of, their responsibility as accusers might then cease. 6. This Presbytery, on the 2d of November last, resolved to take up and consider those charges; and it would have been most consistent with order to have called for them accordingly.

II. The undersigned also protest against the decision of this Presbytery yesterday, by which Presbytery decided Dr. Ely's second motion to be out of order; because Presbytery has thereby virtually said that they can constitutionally and judicially hear objections against the orthodoxy of one of their own members, when no persons appear as his accusers; and when common fame does not render process against him necessary; which is manifestly in opposition to our book of discipline, which says, "Process against a gospel minister shall not be commenced, unless some person or persons undertake to make out the charge; or unless common fame so loudly proclaims the scandal, that the Presbytery find it necessary for the honor of religion, to investigate the charge."

III. Finally the undersigned protest against the decision to take up, consider, and act on, the paper submitted by Dr. Green yesterday, because it is really the commencement of a process against Mr. Barnes in an unconstitutional way; because it contains numerous impeachments of his orthodoxy, and proposes various censures to be inflicted on him; and because it is the apparent design of the whole paper proposed as a minute, to allow all who have heretofore accused Mr. Barnes to act the part of judges in a case in which they are accusers; and thus *unlawfully expose* him to suspension or deposition.

For the foregoing reasons, the undersigned feel constrained to declare, that if their brethren will proceed in the present unconstitutional manner to try their own objections to Mr. Barnes' orthodoxy ,the undersigned must withdraw from all participation in such proceedings; and complain to the next General Assembly.

Philadelphia, Dec. 1, 1830.

Ministers.—Ezra Stiles Ely, Tho. H. Skinner, C. Hoover, William Bacon, A. H. Dashiell, Jas. Patterson, John L. Grant, Jno. W. Scott, Thomas Eustace, George Chandler, Tho. J. Biggs, Albert Barnes; John Smith, Thos. M'Auley, Jos. Sanford.

Elders.—Ambrose White, Samuel Withington, William Darling, Thos. D. Mitchell, Jonathan Roberts, Alexr. J. Dallas, D. H. Mason, Isaac Will, John O'Neil.

December, 2, 1830.

The subscriber unites in the two last grounds of protest, but not on the first with the protestants before named.

R. B. BELVILLE.

In the distorted statement furnished by the Editor of the Philadelphian, Dr. Ely is represented (and Dr. Ely is here his own reporter) as contemptuously presenting the Presbytery "*a low bow*" for the favour they had granted, in permitting him to read his Protest. Other acts equally characteristic of his decorum, throughout these debates might be mentioned, although they have no niche in the Philadelphian. His sneering designation of the Clerk of the Presbytery as an instance, will doubtless be remembered by many as a satisfactory evidence of unsoured temper.

Dr. Green and Mr. Engles, who were appointed a Committhe for that purpose, prepared the following answer to the Protest of Dr. Ely and others.

Answer to the Protest signed by the Rev. Ezra Stiles Ely, and others.

This Protest, in its several divisions and subdivisions, appears to rest altogether on a single principle, and that a false one; namely, that there is no constitutional method of correcting doctrinal error in the ministers of the Presbyterian Church, but by immediately instituting a regular process against them for heresy. Or it may be expressed in the language of the Protest itself. In Division II. the Protestants declare that they "protest against the decision of yesterday, by which Presbytery decided Dr. Ely's second motion to be out of order; because Presbytery has thereby virtually said, that they can constitutionally and judicially hear objections against the orthodoxy of one of their own members, when no persons appear as his accusers; and when common fame does not render process against him necessary; which is manifestly in opposition to our book of discipline, which says, 'Process against a Gospel minister, shall not be commenced unless some person or persons undertake to make out the charge; or unless common fame so loudly proclaims the scandal, that the Presbytery find it necessary, for the honour of religion, to investigate the charge.'" There is inherent evidence, even in this quotation, which speaks of "common fame, loudly proclaiming a scandal;" that gross immoralities were in contemplation, when this article of our constitution was penned and adopted: and by reference to the chapter where it is found (chap. V. on discipline) it will abundantly appear, that the framers of the constitution considered flagrant immoralities (with which Presbytery never intimated an intention of charging Mr. Barnes) as the principal subjects of regular process. Of seventeen sections of which that chapter is composed, there is in the first twelve, but one allusion, and that merely incidental, to any thing relative to doctrines. The whole manifestly refers to personal and practical immoralities. There

is no question, it is admitted, that doctrinal error may, by the constitution, be made the subject of regular process. Yet it should be constantly kept in view, that, at least in most cases, error should be both extreme and palpable, and threatening to spread to the injury of the church, or to become inveterate in him who holds it, before it ought, according to the constitution, to be made the subject of regular process. For when, in the chapter referred to, the subject of doctrinal error is, at sec. 13, distinctly introduced, it is spoken of as "Heresy and Schism," and is immediately followed with a caution that errors less dangerous than those included under these terms, should be more tenderly dealt with; and the two following sections are wholly employed in enjoining kindness, and directing how it should be exercised—and this even after charges have been preferred, and a regular process commenced. Now the minute proposed by Dr. Green, against which this Protest is directed as unconstitutional, contemplated a far milder course than that of charges and a regular process. It, indeed, specifies errors of very dangerous import. But the mover explicitly declared, when he introduced the minute by a motion, that he submitted it merely as a basis for the examination of the sermon of Mr. Barnes; that he would not pledge himself to vote for a single article it contained; that he hoped and trusted that the Presbytery would modify it, in every particular in which it should be found erroneous, and even reject the whole, if they should find it wrong or inexpedient to adopt it. He professed himself to be open to conviction if he had erred, or put a wrong construction on any part of Mr. Barnes' sermon; and he emphatically and repeatedly declared, that it was his earnest wish and hope, that Mr. Barnes and his friends should be fully and candidly heard, on every specification of what was deemed erroneous in his sermon; and the same was the declared understanding of all who spoke on the same side of the question. The mover of the minute, and the most of those who advocated it, went so far as even to give their suffrages that Mr. Barnes should be allowed, not only to speak fully and freely, but also to vote, on every question affecting the orthodoxy of his sermon. Yet this lenient and kind procedure is pronounced to be unconstitutional by the Protest; and the same was often declared, and much insisted on, by the Protestants in debate. It is confidently believed, however, that the constitution of our church does authorize and approve of such mild and cautious proceedings, for the correction of doctrinal error—proceedings other than those of regular process, founded on charges to be formally sustained by accusers, or taken up on the report of common fame. It is believed, that precisely such a proceeding as the minute exhibits, and against which the Protest is directed, is entirely within the meaning of an express constitutional provision. In chap. X. sec. 8, of the

Form of Government, the powers and duties of Presbyteries are distinctly specified; and a part of these is declared to be, "to resolve questions of doctrine or discipline, seasonably and reasonably proposed, and to condemn erroneous opinions, which injure the purity or peace of the church." It is important to observe that this power, and *duty* too, of resolving questions of doctrine and discipline, and of condemning erroneous opinions, pertains alike to every judicature of the Presbyterian Church, above that of the Church Session—alike to Presbyteries, Synods, and the General Assembly. Of the exercise of this power, and the performance of this duty, by the General Assembly, there are, on the records of that supreme judicature of the Presbyterian Church, three memorable instances, or cases—those of Balch, Davis, and Craighead. It affects not the constitutional principle, that these cases were brought before the Assembly by reference from inferior judicatures. It is clear, that there were before the Assembly, neither responsible accusers nor any thing like regular process. The questions to be decided related to *the doctrinal opinions or teachings*, publicly inculcated by certain individuals; and they might have been taken up, on the overture of any member, or any number of members of the Assembly, as well as in any other way. It cannot, therefore, be denied, that it is a constitutional principle of the Presbyterian Church, sanctioned by the supreme judicature of that church, that Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assemblies, may give their opinion on the doctrinal character of any sermon, book, or other publication, whenever they may deem it expedient, and for the good of the church, to do so; and that in doing this, it is not necessary that there should be formal charges and responsible accusers, or the report of common fame; but that it may be done on a motion for the purpose, by any member of the judicature, and generally ought to be done, when it is requested by a considerable number of members.

Now the minute proposed by Dr. Green, was offered in strict conformity with this constitutional principle. It was offered solely, as he distinctly avowed, as *a motion*—a motion for examining and deciding on the doctrinal statements of the published sermon of Mr. Barnes, entitled "The Way of Salvation." The specified contrarieties of the sermon to the doctrinal standards of the Presbyterian Church were stated affirmatively; and it was proper that they should be so stated, because the mover had been one of the complainants to Synod, in regard to measures touching this sermon, and the Synod had enjoined it on the Presbytery "to hear the objections of the complainants," and this proposed minute was a distinct statement of those objections. But the mover repeatedly and earnestly declared, that it was his wish that these objections should be regarded and treated as subjects of candid discussion, and

friendly deliberation. So that if the errors alleged were not found to exist, any cause of uneasiness might be removed; if errors did exist, but were magnified or overstated, that the statement might be corrected or modified; or if the errors were found to exist, *as* stated in the minute, the proper course of procedure with the erring member might be considered: and this was in fact the course which the Presbytery pursued—so far as it could be done, after the protestants refused to take any part of the discussion of the doctrinal points of Mr. Barnes' sermon.

The Presbytery feel it to be their sacred duty on this occasion to remark, that if "erroneous opinions which injure the purity and peace of the church," could not be "condemned" and corrected, in any other way than by the institution of a regular process conducted by accusers, or taken up on common fame, the purity and peace of the church would be put in extreme jeopardy. Not only is the conducting of a regular process so unpleasant in its management, as to make many good men shrink from it entirely, but error is often so subtle in its incipient stages, that it may be widely spread and operate most injuriously, before it can be met by formal charges. The whole history of the Church, in regard to the rise and progress of heresy, and of the means taken to withstand it, bears testimony to this truth, and to its importance. Once establish the point, (and this protest seeks to establish it) that nothing can be done to arrest or check doctrinal error, but by formal charges and regular process, and the safety of the Church, in regard to its orthodoxy, is gone. Error will proceed so far, under various disguises and evasions, that it cannot be arrested even by process—not at least till it assumes its most offensive form, and then only by a convulsion, which will probably rend the Church. It is believed, that there ought to be much done by Presbyteries to check error in doctrine, without formal process—more, far more, than by a resort to this method for restraining its progress. Among other advantages, the brother who has begun to wander from the truth, is much more likely to be reclaimed—one great object of discipline—in the way recommended, than when formally prosecuted and put on his defence.

It ought to be constantly kept in mind, that it was the object of the minute, against which the protest is directed, to specify "the objections of those who complained to the Synod" against the *sermon*, considered separately from its author; and that hence it was, that the mover of the minute, and many others with him, not only wished and entreated Mr. Barnes and his friends to give every explanation in their power of the supposed errors, but were willing that Mr. Barnes should vote, as well as deliberate, on every question relative to points specified in the minute. The course to be taken relative to the *author* of the sermon, was to be an after consideration. Through

oversight, a few words were introduced into the minute which appeared to refer *directly* to the author of the sermon; but these words, as soon as noticed in the after discussion, were immediately stricken out or changed; and this at the request of the mover. It was the evident and declared intention of this minute, to examine and decide, in the first instance, on the *doctrines of the sermon*, and on them only—The *result* of the examination was to determine what, or whether any proceeding, in relation to the author, would be proper and necessary. As, therefore, Mr. Barnes was not to be implicated in the result of the investigation, if no material errors were found in the sermon; and even if such errors were found, as the method of procedure in regard to him was to be subsequently and separately considered, the statement of the protest is utterly incorrect, when it affirms that this was "really the commencement of a process against Mr. Barnes in an unconstitutional way." The constitutionality of this method of procedure is asserted and taught in the minutes of the General Assembly for 1824—taught in language as explicit and direct as if it had been formed in reference to this very case. The minute referred to is found on pages 219 and 220 of the year just mentioned, and is in the following words, viz. "Perhaps no man ought to be tried *on charges to be preferred and to be supported by evidence*, who is not present, and without his own consent. A trial, in the nature of things, cannot be impartial, when there is but one party heard. And in this case no injury would have been sustained by delay, *for the Synod might have proceeded instantly to condemn the errors of Mr. Craighead's book, as the General Assembly did in the case of the Gospel Plan of W. C. Davis;* the *process* against the author however did not commence *till sometime afterwards.*" Here it is explicitly stated that the errors of Mr. Craighead's *book*, and in his absence too, might have been *instantly condemned*, and the process against the author (unlawful in his absence) might have been commenced *sometime afterwards;* and a case is referred to, in which the General Assembly acted in this very manner. The protest, therefore, is exactly as much in hostility with the proceedings of the General Assembly, as it is with those of the Presbytery. On this ground, it is believed, the Presbytery may safely leave it.

But the protest pleads, that, in June last, charges against the orthodoxy of Mr. Barnes were introduced into the Presbytery. The just and true statement of the fact, in this particular, is, that the charges were offered solely with a view to arrest the installation of Mr. Barnes, till the alleged unsound doctrine of his sermon should be considered and decided on. By refusing *then* to consider the charges, their design was completely frustrated; and, therefore, it would be utterly improper and unfair, to call them up now, when Mr. Barnes has

actually been installed, and the purpose for which the charges were made, has been entirely defeated. Besides, when the charges, after having been read by a member as a part of his speech, were thrown out of Presbytery, as being unseasonable and improper, (for such was the fact,) they were no longer the property of the Presbytery, but became as much the property of the individual who presented them, as any other of his private papers. To claim, as a matter of right, to call up, at a future and distant day, a motion or a paper, which was utterly rejected when offered, and when the object of the motion or paper, no longer exists, is believed to be without an example, in any deliberative body, civil or ecclesiastical, till it was furnished in the present case. The charges in question, as the records of Presbytery abundantly show, were not offered, till every other mode of bringing the sermon of Mr. Barnes under review had been attempted, and attempted in vain. But the Synod has placed the complainants on other ground than that which requires the making of charges—the very ground which the complainants had constantly endeavoured to occupy, till they were driven from it, and were obliged, as a last resort, in their endeavours to prevent what they deemed a most injurious measure, to offer to support charges—a course of procedure which they had frequently been called on to adopt, and which, when adopted, was evaded by pleading a point of order —and pleading it too, on what the Synod manifestly considered as untenable ground, inasmuch as the Presbytery was called to consider and decide on whatever related to the reception and installation of Mr. Barnes, and nothing could relate more intimately to his installation, than charges which, if sustained, had a tendency to prevent it. But when the Synod have restored the complainants to the ground which they had always believed and contended was the most proper, it is to the last degree unreasonable, to insist that the rejected charges be introduced, or that similar ones be formed and preferred.

But it is urged, as a decisive argument in the Protest, that "this Presbytery, on the 2d of November last, resolved to take up and consider those charges." The fact which is thus stated in the Protest, and which is undeniable, is one which the Presbytery wish could be buried in everlasting oblivion—not for the sake of the present majority of Presbytery, but for the sake of those who then formed the majority, and did that which must stand recorded as *a Presbyterial act.* The circumstances under which the Presbytery met and acted, on the 2d of November last, are correctly set forth in the Protest of two members against the proceedings then had; and therefore need not be here repeated. But this Presbytery can never regard a call for charges, made in such circumstances as were those in which the Presbytery met and acted on the 2d of Nov. ber, as possessing any binding force. In the close of the Pro-

test, there is an intimation that those who had been the accusers of Mr. Barnes, ought not to act the part of judges.—On which the Presbytery remark, that none of its members have ever shown more zeal, as the accusers of Mr. Barnes, than others have shown in his defence ; and that *advocates* are quite as much disqualified for being judges, as *accusers*. It is with grief and pain, that the Presbytery have marked the spirit manifested in this Protest, and more fully exhibited when it was presented. Most gladly would the Presbytery have received the aid of their brethren, in examining the doctrines of Mr. Barnes' sermon, and heard their votes decisively given, either in approbation or disapprobation, of every article stated in the minute against which they protest. To obtain the candid and explicit opinion of every member of Presbytery, on the doctrines of this sermon, has, from first to last, been most frankly and earnestly sought, by those who have considered those doctrines as unsound ; and from first to last this opinion has been withheld, by most of the Protestants—withheld on some plea framed on a point of order. But the Presbytery cannot consent to neglect what they regard as a sacred and imperious duty, because they cannot have the company of their brethren, and must, therefore, although with unfeigned reluctance, proceed without them.

The motion of Mr. Engles to enter upon the examination of the sermon was then put and carried, by a vote of 27 to 10. It was at length hoped, that Presbytery would be permitted to obey the injunction of Synod, but that reasonable expectation was disappointed as soon as it was entertained. The majority had still to submit to a train of proceeding, the most vexatious. If the artillery of the main body was silenced, the reserve corps had still the means of annoyance. We will present the several obstacles thrown in the way of the Presbytery, in their attempt to obey the requisition of Synod, in numerical order, that they may be more distinctly noticed.

1. Mr. Barnes inquired of Presbytery whether he had the right of appeal to the General Assembly, and of thus arresting the further consideration of his case. After considerable discussion, it was decided that he had not a right to appeal at this stage, and that the constitution had never contemplated the communication of a power to any individual, by which he might completely prevent the exercise of discipline or an inquiry into doctrine, in his own case, in an inferior judicatory.*

*Dr. Ely, in the account which he has given of this act, has entirely misstated the reason which induced the Presbytery to refuse Mr. Barnes' appeal. He says, "it was agreed, (that is, by Presbytery) that Mr. Barnes had no right to appeal, *because he had not then submitted to a trial.*" The true and the just reason we have stated above.

2. Dr. Mitchell, an elder from Frankford, then moved, "That the paper now under consideration be committed, for the purpose of preparing such a view of objections to the sermon as shall embrace all the authorities and proofs in support of such objections, and that for this end, the Committee be allowed two weeks to make their report."

The object of this motion was certainly not to expedite business, when a paper precisely of the character contemplated in the resolution, was then before the Presbytery in the minute of Dr. Green. The motion of Dr. Mitchell was negatived.

3. Mr. Barnes then presented the following paper, viz.: "The undersigned, deeming it unconstitutional to try and condemn a sermon of his without placing him on trial on regular charges, according to the book of discipline; and believing that an investigation of the sermon where he cannot constitutionally make a regular defence on charges regularly brought, is improper; and desirous that full justice may be done to him and the subject, acknowledges himself the author of a sermon called the Way of Salvation, with the notes thereto appended, published at Morristown, N. J. and professing himself ready to answer any charges which may be alleged to that sermon respecting his orthodoxy, with the privilege of a proper explanation of its sentiments and meaning; most respectfully requests of the Presbytery to proceed in regular form to try him on the sentiments of that sermon; either on the ground of common fame, or by a responsible accuser, or by accusers.

(Signed) ALBERT BARNES.

Nov. 2, 1830."

Dr. Green, Mr. Winchester, and Mr. Latta, who were appointed a committee for the purpose, assigned the following reasons, why the Presbytery could not comply with the request made in this paper, viz.

The reasons why the Presbytery refused to take the course requested by Mr. Barnes in the examination of his sermon.

The basis, or fundamental position, on which Mr. Barnes rests the whole of his objections and request, is the very same with that of the protest already answered; namely, that it is "unconstitutional to try and condemn a sermon of his, without placing him on trial on regular charges, according to the book of discipline." But this, it has already been shown, is altogether a gratuitous assumption; it may, however, be remarked in addition, that it is an allegation made in direct opposition, not merely to the opinion of the present majority of Presbytery, but to the decision of the Synod, by which the present proceedings have been enjoined; and that it is in op-

position to the express judgment of the General Assembly, has been clearly shown in answering the protest.

Let it be distinctly noted, that it was because a majority of the Presbytery refused to permit the orthodoxy of Mr. Barnes' sermon to come under examination, previously to his reception and installation, that complaint was made to Synod; and the Synod, by declaring, as they do in their first resolution, that "the Presbytery gave just ground of complaint to the minority," did explicitly assert and sanction the constitutionality of the principle on which the minority made their complaint. And the Synod, proceeding on the very same ground, namely, that the Presbytery had refused to the complainants the exercise of a constitutional right, "referred them back to the Presbytery of which they are members, with an injunction to that Presbytery, to hear and decide on the orthodoxy of the sermon of Mr. Barnes, and to take such order on the whole subject as is required by a regard to the purity of the Church and its acknowledged doctrines and order." Can it be pretended, then, that after sustaining the complaint of the minority, and sending them back to their Presbytery to be redressed, that it was the mind of the Synod, to put that minority on other ground than that which they had desired to take, and which had been refused them? Such a supposition cannot be made, without a manifest perversion of the language and evident intention of the Synod. It cannot, with any show of reason, be supposed, that the Synod intended that charges should be tabled against Mr. Barnes, or that he should be prosecuted on the ground of common fame; for they say not a word of this kind, and the whole import of their decision is, that his sermon should be examined as the complainants at first attempted to examine it. In a word, no fair construction can be given to the injunction of the Synod, but this, that the Presbytery should hear and decide on the objections to the orthodoxy of the sermon of Mr. Barnes, in the very form and manner in which these objections were at first attempted to be made; and for the counteraction of which attempt, the Presbytery was censured, as denying to the complainants the exercise of a constitutional right.

The Presbytery, therefore, have refused to take the course pointed out by Mr. Barnes, because he asks them, 1st. To surrender to his request a constitutional principle, which the Presbytery consider as vital to the purity of the Church, and the maintainance of which they regard as of far more importance than any decision which may be made on his particular case. And 2dly. To do this, in dereliction of the very ground assigned to them by the Synod; and assigned in compliance with the petition of the complainants: 3dly. To do this, for a mode of procedure necessarily productive of delay, and always attended with considerable difficulties; and, at the same

time, not productive of a single advantage to Mr. Barnes, beyond the method proposed by Presbytery—provided that it is his sincere desire, that a fair, candid, and impartial examination of his sermon should be had; and that such decision should be made on its contents, as is "required by a regard to the purity of the Church, and to its acknowledged doctrines, and order."

The application of Mr. Barnes, to be tried upon the ground of his sermon, was particularly strange, as he had more than once declared in Presbytery, that he did not consider this Presbytery as having any jurisdiction over that sermon; not because he had not *avowed* it as his production, but because it had been preached and published in the bounds of another Presbytery.

4. It was then moved by Dr. Skinner that the original business be postponed to take up this motion, viz.

"Resolved, That the request of Mr. Barnes, as presented in his paper, be granted." This motion, the Moderator pronounced to be out of order, as it had just been decided that the request could *not* be granted.

5. Dr. Mitchell then moved a postponement of the business to take up the following motion, viz:

"Whereas certain members of this Presbytery appeared in the character of complainants before the Synod of Philadelphia at their late sessions in Lancaster touching certain procedures of Presbytery in relation to the Rev. A. Barnes and his printed sermon, which complaint issued in an injunction from the Synod to the Presbytery to hear and decide on the objections of the complainants to the orthodoxy of that sermon, and to do in the case whatever a regard to the order and purity of the church might seem to require; and whereas, in literal compliance with that injunction, Presbytery have heard at full length a written statement of objections with such supposed proofs annexed as the Confession of Faith could furnish; and whereas the manifest state of feeling in the Presbytery renders a compliance with the latter part of Synod's injunction altogether impracticable by a protracted discussion of said objections; and whereas, our book of discipline wisely provides that, in difficult questions and such as may greatly divide a Presbytery, a reference of the whole matter to the General Assembly may be highly proper, therefore, Resolved, that the sermon of Mr. Barnes, together with the complainants' objections, and such explanations as Mr. Barnes may think proper to furnish, be referred to the next General Assembly, for their final decision."

This motion was negatived; but truth compels us to remark, that *nine-tenths* of that improper excitement, which the Dr. considered as disqualifying the Presbytery for the faithful

discharge of their high duties, was chargeable upon the minority, of which he was a member; a fact which justifies the application of the maxim, "Physician heal thyself."

6. Dr. M'Auley moved "that the further discussion of this subject be postponed, and the whole subject be referred to the General Assembly for final adjudication." This motion the moderator pronounced to be out of order, as being a mere repetition of previous ones which had been negatived.

After having followed the minority through all their intricate windings, we are disposed to pause for a moment, and wonder at the multiplied difficulties which were thus assembled around a very simple question. The direction of Synod was extremely plain and explicit; there was in it no ambiguity of phrase to countenance double interpretations; the course it pointed out was well defined, which was, first to examine the orthodoxy of Mr. Barnes' sermon *abstractly*, and then, guided by the *result* of this examination, to take such further order on the subject as a regard to the purity of the Church might require; and why then the zeal, the ingenuity, and perseverance of the minority to avoid this obvious course? Why insist that Mr. Barnes should be regularly charged and tried? Was it with an intention of placing some of the majority in the attitude of accusers, and of thus depriving them of their privilege of judging and deciding in the case? This was, in the first instance, avowed. Was it with the intention of rendering them publicly odious as the *prosecutors*, or, as it might easily be interpreted, the *persecutors* of Mr. Barnes? This, from the whole aspect of the debate, seemed highly probable. Or, was it from zeal to preserve the constitution of the church inviolate? This was the alleged reason, and upon it the changes were rung for the space of two days.

Mr. Barnes asserted, that the only constitutional ground upon which his case could be considered, was a formal process against himself, upon the ground of his sermon, although he had before asserted that he was not amenable to this Presbytery for that sermon. Dr. Ely reiterated, that this was the only constitutional mode of proceeding; although, in an attempt to extricate himself from a difficulty at the time of Mr. Barnes' installation, he publicly declared, that he had just found from the *constitution*, that charges could not lie against Mr. Barnes, on the ground of the sermon, because if there was offence in the sermon, it was an offence committed beyond the limits of our jurisdiction. Now let it be asked, is *their* interpretation of the constitution to be admitted, who can interpret it, to mean two opposite things, as occasion may demand? Is *their* construction of this constitution to be admitted as infallible *now*, whose construction of it on a former occasion, was so glaringly erroneous, as to call down upon them the condemnation of Synod? If the minority were re-

garded with distrust in urging this plea, the distrust was certainly justifiable. The course which the Presbytery was now pursuing in the examination of the sermon, was not only the most obvious; the most constitutional; the most accordant with the resolution of Synod; but it was the most mild and tender. Severe measures are never to be resorted to, when more lenient ones may be sufficient. The kindest feelings were shown towards Mr. Barnes from the commencement, by those who felt themselves obliged in duty, to object to his sermon; and there is but one minute on the records, which seems to bear an unfriendly aspect; we allude to that in which he was excluded from a vote in the proceedings; *but let it be remembered that this was a decision procured by the votes of his friends, in opposition to a motion by one of the majority, that he be considered as having the right, both to deliberate and vote.*

But to proceed. The obstacles being at length removed, as it was confidently thought, the minute of Dr. Green was once more called up. But before the consideration of it was commenced, one or two additional preliminaries were to be settled. Mr. Barnes arose and requested leave of absence during the remainder of the sessions; alleging that he could be of *no use* to the Presbytery; that he had *important* duties to attend to, elsewhere; and, moreover, that although he was confident that he could make such explanations of his sermon as would satisfy the Presbytery, of the entire harmony of his views with those contained in the Confession of Faith, yet, upon advising with his friends, he had come to the determination not to offer them at that time!! If astonishment was felt at other things which had transpired in the course of this discussion, unmingled amazement was felt at this expression. Mr. Barnes felt confident that he could remove every difficulty; that he could quiet an unhappy excitement; that he could reconcile alienated brethren; that he could restore harmony to a rent and divided Presbytery; that he could do all this real service to the cause of Christ, by an explanation which would cost him neither time nor labour, but that nevertheless, this explanation should be withheld, from a regard to some trifling punctilio!! How incredible would this appear, if the testimony in confirmation was not indisputable. Mr. Barnes was excused from further attendance, agreeably to his request; the majority, and particularly, Dr. Green, who proposed the minute, earnestly requesting him to remain, that he might hear every objection made to the sermon, and offer any explanations; and the *minority* as earnestly voting that he should go; although, afterwards they complained that he was thus (by their own decision) virtually shut out of the house, and that to condemn his sermon in his absence, would be an extreme unkindness!

But there is another feature which must be added to this picture of inconsistency. The Rev. Messrs. Skinner, Ely, Belville, Biggs, Scott, Dashiell, Eustace, Hoover, Bacon, John Smith, Patterson, Sanford, Grant, and M'Auley, *Ministers;* and Messrs. Roberts, Darling, Dallas, Mitchell, Mason, Withington, Vandyke, O'Neil, and Stratton, *Elders*, declared it to be their intention, to take no further part in the deliberations now pending, and to decline giving any vote it the case; because, as they alleged, to take *any part* in an unconstitutional proceeding, would be tantamount to giving in their sanction. This was indeed a desertion of Mr. Barnes, at the most critical juncture of his affairs. What! not one word in the defence of the sermon! not one single attempt by the advocates of the author, to defend it against the charge of *heresy!* The plea of unconstitutionality is too flimsy to be received, and we are compelled to seek the reasons of their singular determination elsewhere. It will be recollected, that from the first introduction of this business before the Presbytery, these same individuals had evinced great reluctance in touching upon the *doctrinal points* in Mr. Barnes' sermon; and may it not fairly be inferred, that the same sensitiveness, induced them to avoid committing themselves upon these points *now?* If, in this intimation, we be condemned for judging motives, our only plea of justification is founded upon the strong aspect of the facts. Having, however, firmly and repeatedly declared their intention of remaining silent, the minority found that they had legislated themselves into a dilemma, from which the conciliatory spirit of the majority alone could extricate them. A standing rule provides that silent members, unless formally excused from voting, shall be considered as acquiescing with the majority in the decision of a question, and, therefore, as depriving themselves of the privilege of complaint, protest, or appeal. The minority were thus completely at the mercy of the majority, who, by refusing to excuse them from voting, could have identified them as a part of themselves, and thus excluded them from a resort to a higher judicatory. Their power, however, was magnanimously exercised; the request of the minority was fully granted, and, although the concession was a very unusual and liberal one, no "*low bow*" from Dr. Ely, was received in return.

All the preliminaries being thus settled, the minute offered by Dr. Green was read by paragraphs, discussed, and adopted, and is as follows, viz:

FINAL DECISION.

The Presbytery of Philadelphia, agreeably to the direction of the Synod at their recent meeting in Lancaster, having considered the sermon of the Revd. Albert Barnes, entitled the

Way of Salvation, are of the opinion that it contains speculations of dangerous tendency on some of the principal points in Christian theology, and ought not therefore to be sanctioned as expressing that view of the great truths of God's word, which the Presbyterian Church has uniformly adopted and which is exhibited in their authorised Confession of Faith.

In stating the doctrine of *original* sin, the author employs a phraseology which is calculated to mislead, and which appears evidently to conflict with the spirit and letter of the standards of the Presbyterian Church.

1. He denies that the posterity of Adam are responsible or answerable for Adam's first sin, which he committed as the federal head of his race. Thus, p. 6, "Christianity does not charge on men crimes of which they are not guilty. It does not say, as I suppose, *that the sinner is held to be personally answerable for the transgressions of Adam or of any other man.*"

Although the word *transgressions* is here used plurally, yet it is evident from the whole tenor of this division of the discourse, that the prime sin of Adam, which constituted his apostacy from God, is meant. Again, he says, p. 7, "Neither the facts, nor any proper inference from the facts affirm, that I am in either case *personally responsible for what another man* (referring to Adam) *did before I had an existence.*" And he explicitly declares that if God had charged upon mankind such a responsibility, it would have been *clearly unjust*, vide p. 6. The doctrine of responsibility here impugned is clearly expressed, Con. of F. cap. vi. 6. "Every sin, both *original* and actual, being a *transgression* of the righteous law of God and contrary thereunto, doth in its own nature bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God and curse of the law and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal and eternal."

2. In accordance with the above doctrine, that mankind are not responsible for Adam's sin, he affirms, p. 7, that "Christianity affirms the fact, that in connection with the sin of Adam, or as a *result*, all *moral-agents* will sin and sinning will die." And then proceeds to explain the principle upon which the universality of sin is to be accounted for, by representing it to be the result of Adam's sin, in the same sense, as the misery of a drunkard's family is the result of his intemperance. Here it would seem, the author maintains that the same relationship subsists between every man and his family, as subsisted between Adam and his posterity; that the same principle of moral government applies to both cases alike, or in other words, that mankind hold no other relationship to Adam, than that of children to a natural progenitor.

The public federal or representative character of Adam is thus denied, contrary to the explicit statement in the answer to the 22 Q. of Larg. Cat. "The covenant being made with

Adam as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity; all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation sinned in him, and fell with him, in that first transgression."

3. He declares, p. 7. that "the notion of imputing sin is an invention of modern times," contrary to Con. of F. Chap. vi. 3, "They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation."

4. In p. 5, he admits that his language on the subject of original sin differs from that used by the Confession of Faith on the same subject, and then accounts for this difference on the ground of the difficulty of affixing any clear and definite meaning to the expression "we sinned *in* him and fell *with* him." This expression he considers, as far as it is capable of interpretation, as "intended to convey the idea, not that the sin of Adam is imputed to us, or set over to our account, but that there was a personal *identity* constituted between Adam and his posterity, so that it was really *our act*, and *ours only*, after all that is chargeable on us."

The whole of this statement is exceedingly incautious and improper. The language of the Confession of Faith on one of the cardinal doctrines is held up as obscure and unintelligible, or, if possessing any meaning, as expressing an absurdity. The framers of this confession are charged with the absurdity of maintaining the personal identity between Adam and his posterity, when their language conveys no more than a federal or representative relationship. This whole view of the doctrine of original sin, is, in the opinion of Presbytery obscure, perplexed, fruitful of dangerous consequences, and, therefore, censurable.

The statements of this sermon on the doctrine of Atonement, are also in the opinion of Presbytery, in some important features, erroneous, and contrary to the orthodox views.

1. At p. 11. He says "this atonement was for all men. It was an offering made for the race. It had not respect so much to individuals, as to the law and perfections of God. It was an opening of the way of pardon, a making forgiveness consistent, a preserving of truth, a magnifying of the law, and had no particular reference to any class of men."

Here it is denied that the atonement had any special relation to the elect, which it had not also to the non-elect. But if it be true that the atonement offered by Christ, had no "respect to individuals," "no particular reference to any class of men," upon what principle can it be regarded as a satisfaction to divine justice for the sins of men? or in what proper sense can Christ be considered as a vicarious sacrifice? unless the atonement be a satisfaction for the sins of individuals, upon what principle can it open the way of pardon, make forgiveness con-

sistent, preserve truth or magnify the law? The special reference of the atonement to a chosen people in opposition to this view is taught Con. of F. cap. viii. 5. "The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he, thro' the Eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father, and purchased not only reconciliation but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him." Again, in answer to Q. 44 L. C. "Christ executeth the office of a Priest in his once offering himself a sacrifice without spot to God, to be a reconciliation for the sins of his people," &c.

2. At p. 11. He says "The atonement of itself secured the salvation of no one," and again "The atonement secured the salvation of no one, except as God had promised his Son that he should see of the travail of his soul, and except on the condition of repentance and faith." This language is incautious and calculated to mislead, as it seems to imply that the atonement of itself does not secure its own application, and therefore may by possibility fail in its design. It is improper to suspend its efficacy upon conditions, when the conditions themselves are the results of its efficacy, see Con. of F. cap. viii. 8. "To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same; making intercession for them, and revealing unto them in and by the word the mysteries of salvation; effectually persuading them by his Spirit to believe and obey," &c.

3. At p. 10. He unequivocally denies that Christ endured the penalty of the law. "He did not indeed endure the penalty of the law, for his sufferings were not eternal, nor did he endure remorse of conscience; but he endured so much suffering, bore so much agony, that the Father was pleased to accept of it in the place of the eternal torments of all that should be saved." Here it seems to be inculcated that Christ did not satisfy the precise claims which a violated law had upon the sinner, but that he did what might be considered a substitute for such satisfaction; or it is implied that God remitted or waived the original claim and accepted of something less. And that this is the sentiment of the author, is evident from his language p. 11. "Christ's sufferings were severe, more severe than those of *any mortal* before or since; but they bore, so far as we can see, only a very distant resemblance to the pains of hell, the proper penalty of the law. Nor is it possible to conceive that the sufferings of a *few hours*, however severe, could equal pains though far less intense, eternally prolonged. Still less that the sufferings of human nature in a single instance, for the divine nature could not suffer, should be equal to the eternal pain of many millions." Here it is affirmed that Christ was not *capable* of enduring that penalty which the justice of God had exacted of the sinner, that his sufferings bore a very distant resemblance to it, and by consequence that the penalty

of the law has been either relaxed or is yet unpaid, and that the justice of God has waived its original demand or is yet unsatisfied.

The whole of this language seems derogatory to Christ as an all sufficient Redeemer; it judges of the human nature of Christ as if it were a common human nature, it leaves out of view the infinite support which the divine nature was capable of imparting to the human nature of Christ, and is very different from the view of this subject given by the framers of our standards in the answer to the 38 Q. of L. C. "It was requisite that the Mediator should be God, that he might sustain and keep the human nature from sinking under the *infinite wrath of God* and the power of death; give worth and efficacy to his sufferings, obedience and intercession; and to satisfy God's justice." &c. &c.

In discoursing on human ability the sermon contains expressions which do not seem to be well judged. In p. 14. it is said, "it is not to any want of physical strength that this rejection is owing, for men have power enough in themselves, to hate both God and their fellow men, and it requires less physical power to love God than to hate him;" and on the same page he represents man's inability as solely in the will; and on p. 30, that men are not saved simply because they *will not* be saved. Here physical ability is represented as competent to the performance of a moral action, which is an improper application of terms, and human inability as resulting merely from the will, and not from total depravity, which is contrary to Confession Faith, cap. vi. 4. "From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions," and Confession of Faith, cap. ix. 3. "Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation, so, as a natural man being altogether averse from that which is good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto."

Still further, the language of the sermon, on the subject of conformity to the standards of the church, if sanctioned, would give to every individual after adopting these standards, the liberty of dissenting from them as much, and as often, as he might desire. Thus p. 6, he says, "It is not denied that this language varies from the statements which are often made on this subject, and from the opinion which has been entertained by many. And, it is admitted, that it does not accord with that used on the same subject in the Confession of Faith, and other standards of doctrine." And again, p. 12. "The great principle on which the author supposes the truths of religion are to be preached, and on which he endeavours to act is, that the Bible is to be interpreted by all the honest helps within the reach of the preacher, and then proclaimed as it

is, let it lead where it will, within, or without the circumference of any arrangement of doctrines. He is supposed to be responsible, not at all for its impinging on any theological system; nor is he to be cramped by any frame work of Faith that has been reared around the Bible." This language would seem to imply, that an individual may enter the bosom of a church by a public reception of its creed, and continue in the communion of that church, although he should subsequently discover that its creed was not founded on the word of God. Whilst the liberty of every man to accept or reject any particular creed, is fully acknowledged by this Presbytery, yet, they do deny, that any minister, whilst he remains in the communion of the Presbyterian Church, has a right to impugn its creed, or to make a public declaration that he is not bound by its authority.

In fine, a *whole view* of this discourse seems to warrant the belief, that the grand and fundamental doctrine of justification, as held by the Protestant Reformers, and taught clearly and abundantly in the standards of the Presbyterian Church, is really not held, but denied in this sermon. For the imputation of Adam's sin is denied; and the endurance of the penalty of the law by Christ, is denied; and any special reference of the atonement to the elect of God, is denied, and the righteousness of Christ as the meritorious ground of our acquittal and acceptance with God, is not once mentioned, although the text of the discourse naturally points to the doctrine; and when it is considered that the imputation of Adam's first sin to his posterity, and the imputation of the sins of God's people to their surety Saviour, and the imputation of his finished righteousness to them, do all rest upon the same ground, and must all stand or fall together, and that it has been found in fact, that those who deny one of these, do generally deny the whole, and to be consistent, must necessarily do so, it is no forced conclusion, but one which seems inevitable, that the sermon does really reject the doctrine of justification as held by the Reformers, and as taught in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms; that it does not teach as the answer to the question on justification in our shorter Catechism asserts, that "Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us *as righteous in his sight only for the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us, and received by faith alone.*"

It is not satisfactory, that the sermon says, that "Christ died in the place of sinners;" that it speaks of "the merits of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ"—of "the love of Christ," of "putting on the Lord Jesus Christ," of being "willing to drop into the hands of Jesus, and to be saved by his merit alone" of God, "sprinkling on the soul the blood of Jesus, and freely pardoning all its sins;" since this language may be

used, and is actually used by some who explicitly deny, that Christ took the law place of sinners, bore the curse of God's law in their room and stead, and that they are saved only by the imputation to them of his perfect righteousness.

On the whole, the Presbytery express their deep regret, that Mr. Barnes should have preached and published a discourse, so highly objectionable, and so manifestly, in some of its leading points, opposed to the doctrines of the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of the Presbyterian Church; they earnestly recommend to Mr. Barnes, to reconsider and renounce the erroneous matter contained in his printed sermon, as specified in the foregoing decisions of Presbytery, and with a view to afford time to Mr. Barnes for reflection and reconsideration, in reference to the errors of his sermon, and for opportunity for such of the brethren, as may choose to converse freely with him on the subject, the Presbytery do suspend their final decision on the case, until their next stated meeting."

This minute being adopted, it was moved by Mr. Engles, "that Dr. Green, Mr. M'Calla, and Mr. Latta, be a committee to wait on Mr. Barnes, to communicate to him the result of the deliberations of this Presbytery in the examination of his sermon, and to converse with him freely and affectionately on the points excepted to in that sermon; in the hope and expectation, that the interview will result in removing or diminishing the difficulties which have arisen in his case; and that they report at the next meeting of Presbytery." To the surprise of every person present, Dr. Ely arose to oppose this motion as containing a direct insult to Mr. Barnes; and to signify the intention of the minority to vote on this question. They had, as it will be recollected, but a short time previous, declared their fixed determination not to vote on the supposed unconstitutional measures pursued against Mr. Barnes: this motion evidently constituted a very prominent part of these measures,—and therefore—but before the obvious conclusion is drawn, the reader will please recollect, that the DOCTRINAL PART of these measures had been already settled, and a vote might *now* safely be given without vouching for the orthodoxy of Mr. Barnes' sermon.

As a final proceeding, the minority signified their intention of complaining to the next General Assembly. The nature of their complaint is not yet known, but doubtless it is grounded upon *some point of order!*

Before we conclude this narrative, we wish to offer a remark or two upon the exceedingly unfair statement published by Dr. Ely in the Philadelphian, over the columns of which he possesses unlimited control. It appears very *remarkable*, that in that account there should be no copy of Dr. Green's minute, which was adopted by the Presbytery; the insertion of which was necessary as a finish to the business; and which he

could readily have procured by applying to the temporary clerk. What could have been the intention of this omission? Was there a wish to conceal from the churches, the grounds upon which the Presbytery condemned Mr. Barnes' sermon?

It is also *remarkable*, that the motion offered by Mr. Engles for the appointment of a committee to seek an interview with Mr. Barnes, although it forms but a *short* minute, much shorter than Dr. Mitchell's motions, should have been presented in a mutilated state; whilst a very convenient *et cetera* completely throws the reader into the dark as to the nature and intention of that motion. Was Dr. Ely fearful that the entire insertion of this motion would spoil his comment?

It is *remarkable*, that Dr. Ely has in several places stated as a fact, that Mr. Engles was heard by the Presbytery, in offering his remarks on the orthodoxy of Mr. Barnes' sermon, and in one place, that he "was heard in desultory objections against the orthodoxy of Mr. Barnes, until 1 o'clock, P. M.," when Dr. Ely well knew at the time he was penning the article, *that Mr. Engles did no more at the times specified, than perform his duty as the Clerk of Presbytery, in reading the minute of Dr. Green by paragraphs.* Can there remain a doubt that this misrepresentation was wilful, and that it was designed in some way to throw contempt and odium upon the individual alluded to, as *if* he had been exceedingly loquacious and officious in making desultory speeches on doctrine, when he did no more than obey the call of the house in reading the minute offered by another!

It is still further *very remarkable*, that Dr. Ely has discovered that the *minority* are actually the *majority!* This is clearly demonstrated to all acquainted with arithmetical legerdemain, and is at least satisfactory in proof of one thing—that the calculator would fondly wish to be in *a majority.* But if it were proved, would not the proof come too late! He that has lost a battle, has but little credit or consolation in drafting a plan, according to which he *might* certainly have won it! But let us scrutinize this calculation. First, he adds to the *minority* four absent members, (one of whom, the Rev. Dr. Wilson, has since been translated, as we believe, to a happier world,) because it is *morally certain* that they would have voted with the minority; then he inserts Mr. Barnes' name, as voting for himself; then he strikes from the *majority* two members who voted for the condemnation of the sermon, because they merely dissented, when a particular item in Dr. Green's minute was adopted; then he includes Mr. Grier among the doubtful, although he had frequently expressed his desire to give his testimony in favour of orthodoxy, and was only prevented from being present by severe indisposition; then he omits any mention of Mr. Junkin, although he was found with the majority in the Synod, and there strongly ob-

jected to the sermon; and thus the case is clearly proved! But suppose Mr. Steel and Mr. Janvier be restored to the side upon which their votes were given, and upon which their principles constrain them to stand; that Mr. Grier and Mr. Junkin be added to the same side; and Dr. Wilson's name, and Mr. Barnes' name be omitted, how will the case then stand. We leave Dr. Ely to decide.

In the account furnished in the Philadelphian, it is still further *remarkable*, that no mention is made of the fact, that Dr. Ely was the *only member* of the Presbytery, who hazarded the attempt of reconciling the sermon of Mr. Barnes with the Confession of Faith; whilst Dr. M'Auley, Mr. Sanford, and some others of the minority, intimated, that there were, unquestionably, points in the sermon, which were censurable.

But we are unwilling to extend this narrative, by alluding to any other *remarkable* features of the account furnished in the Philadelphian. The majority have no reason to fear the publication of a true and honest history of their proceedings, nay, it is what they most sincerely desire; fully aware, that when idle reports shall cease to circulate; when the heats of passion subside, and when judgment shall be permitted to pronounce her calm decision, they shall be found to have advocated the cause of truth, and to have exerted their humble influence, in guarding the purity, and strengthening the stability of that Church, whose prosperity is one of the dearest objects of their hearts.

POSTSCRIPT.

Since the above was in type, Mr. Barnes has published in the "Philadelphian" the elaborate paper which he read before the Synod as his defence. He confirms our representation that but *little influence* was produced by his explanations; but this was not only true in relation to the Presbytery, as he would seem to intimate, but likewise to the Synod. A careful perusal of this defence will tend to justify the exceptions taken to the sermon, as will probably, be shown more fully at a future time. That it is plausible in some respects, is admitted; but that it explains and obviates the objections to the orthodoxy of the sermon, is denied. On the subject of Original Sin, Mr. Barnes reiterates his denial, that the posterity of Adam are responsible for that act of apostacy which he committed as a federal head, and then proceeds to affirm in justification of his denial, that it is a prominent feature in the original structure of Calvinism, that a personal identity was constituted between Adam and his posterity, and that the *personal sin* of Adam was considered as the *personal sin* of his posterity, and that it was imputed to them, because it was *their own personal sin!* That is, Calvinism and the Confession of Faith, are represented as holding a theory upon this subject which is radically absurd; and can it be a matter of

surprise that Mr. Barnes rejects an absurdity! Mr. Barnes admits that there is another notion of imputation which is the commonly received one; which is this, that the sin of Adam as our representative is set over to our account; but this he says is not Calvinism, but an invention of modern times! Thus does the confession of Mr. Barnes prove, that the Presbytery has not misinterpreted his sermon in charging upon it the denial of the doctrine of original sin, as commonly received in the Presbyterian Church.

On the subject of the Atonement, Mr. Barnes most fully justifies every expression in the sermon; as for example, "Christ did not endure the penalty of the law"—"the atonement of itself secured the salvation of no one"—and that "it had not respect so much to individuals as to the law and perfections of God." We honestly believe, that the denial of these points is the virtual denial of the work of Christ; explanations can never neutralize the poison conveyed in these expressions; they must absolutely be recalled or stand as evidence against the author of them. Dr. Owen, the Professors of Princeton, and the "Christian Advocate" teach the *sufficiency* of the atonement for all men, as affirmed by Mr. Barnes, and this is a doctrine generally received (Dr. Ely in his recommendation of "Gethsemane," *dissenting*) but this is widely different from Mr. Barnes' view of the atonement, in which, there is no satisfaction of penalty or of divine justice, no positive efficacy, and no reference to individuals, or in other words, a satisfaction made to the law, without respect to any particular *violations* of that law, which is just no satisfaction at all.

We think we could show, from Mr. Barnes' own acknowledgments in this defence, that the Presbytery have not misjudged in a single material point, the doctrines of the sermon; but for this we have not at present, sufficient time or space. We must, however, remark, that Mr. Barnes gives no satisfactory account of the omission in the sermon of the doctrine of justification, for virtually omitted it is, because it has no prominence there in the way of salvation, and is but once alluded to in a distant and obscure manner. If the half column occupied in the defence on this subject, had presented a clear and distinct view of the author's sentiments on this point, it would have been much more creditable to the author, than the plan he has pursued. We must confess we have a difficulty in the admission of a mere avowal on this point; for we naturally are led to inquire, does Mr. Barnes admit imputation in his notion of justification? and, if so, *which notion?* the absurd one charged upon original Calvinism, or the "modern invention?" we are inclined to believe he admits neither, and to what then does his notion of justification amount?

But in conclusion. Mr. Barnes in the closing paragraphs of his defence, reflects severely and bitterly upon the conduct

of those who have opposed his sermon, and makes a strong appeal to public sympathy upon the recital of his grievances. And the Editor, in assisting the attempt, represents Mr. Barnes as a "passive lamb," no doubt under the slaughtering hands of his butchers! But why all this pathos? Are Mr. Barnes' grievances real? has not his sermon been condemned upon substantial grounds? has he not confirmed, in his own defence, the views which have been taken of that sermon? The Presbytery never considered Mr. Barnes, as an *individual*, of sufficient consequence to be the object of a conspiracy, or as the victim of a systematised persecution, why, therefore, should he attempt to secure favour by urging such a plea? The cry of persecution may insure temporary popularity, but it will be but *temporary*, and he that can descend to such a device, deserves the reward of his ingenuity. We hope the public will duly appreciate those expressions in the defence, which are designed *ad captandum vulgus*, or, in plain English, to produce a popular impression, and still be induced to form their opinion on the case, *according to evidence.*

THE END.